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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the international interdisciplinary academic conference that was a central component of the World Parliament of Religions that convened in Chicago (Illinois) during the summer of 1993. The Parliament was held from August 28 through September 4, and that there were approximately 8,633 official registrants from 56 nations, representing about 125 religious and interreligious organizations and associations. Pointing out that nearly 60 scholars from around the world were selected to present academic papers before the Academy of the Parliament, the paper also notes that there were nearly 600 plenary sessions, presentations, workshops, and religious celebrations at the conference. After presenting a historical overview of events leading to the convening of the first parliament in Chicago in 1893, the paper then provides a historical context for the 1993 conference, examining events and circumstances leading up to the contemporary conference from a communication research perspective. The paper concludes that studying the "new religions" as the conference did assists persons in comprehending contemporary cultural conditions and in predicting the possibilities for future religious developments. (Includes 96 notes.) (NKA)

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THE ACADEMY: THE PARLIAMENT OF THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS

Daniel Ross Chandler
1995

Abstract

This paper describes the international interdisciplinary academic conference that was a central component in the 1993 World Parliament that convened in Chicago during the summer of 1993. Specifically, the Parliament was held from August 28 through September 4. There were approximately 8,633 official registrants, and these participants came from 56 nations. They represented about 125 religious and interreligious organizations and associations. Nearly 60 scholars from around the world were selected to present academic papers before the Academy of the Parliament. There were nearly 600 plenary sessions, presentations, workshops, and religious celebrations. The paper describes the Academy within the context provided by the 1993 World's Parliament of Religions.

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THE ACADEMY:

The Parliament of the World's Religions

Considerable contrasts are evident between the first parliament of the world's religions that gathered in Chicago in 1893 and the second parliament that assembled during 1993. The 1893 parliament drew about 400 delegates and were predominately Christian; the second attracted approximately 8,633 official registrants representing a spacious spectrum including Bahai, Buddhist, Christian, Confucian, Hindu, Jain, Jew, Muslim, Native American, Neo-Pagan, Shinto, Sikh, Taoist, Theosophists, Rastafarians, Unitarians, and Zorastrians. Each assembly was described enthusiastically as the greatest gathering of religious leaders in terms of diversity, breadth, and depth of representation. Besides the 38 tribes of Native Americans from the United States, indigenous religious groups in attendance included tribal religions from Africa, Mayans from Guatemala, and and Maoris from New Zealand. Like the 1893 assembly that featured several powerful personalities such as Swami Vivekananda, the 1993 gathering featured a concluding keynote address by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Unlike countless individuals who arrived at the historic meeting a century ago in the "windy city" and discovered themselves as strangers in a foreign land, numerous participants in the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions seemed comfortable within the religious communities that have been established within and around Chicago.

Swami Vivekananda seemed spectacular during September, 1893, when this famous Hindu monk from India discovered himself surrounded by Roman Catholic, Confucian, Taoist, Buddhist, Chriatian, and other Hindu "unofficial representatives." The assembled company presented a colorful contrast with their scarlet vestments, vermillion cloaks, ocher robes, and black ministerial garb.

An enormously significant event happening during the year 1893 was the World's Parliament of Religions that convened amid the World's Columbian Exposition. Conceived as an international exposition commemorating Columbus' historic voyage, the Columbian Exposition was a spectacular attraction covering six hundred sixty-six acres and stretching nearly two miles along Lake Michigan in Jackson Park, Chicago. The elaborate exhibits were displayed in approximately one hundred fifty buildings that were designed by prominent architects and constructed from a composition resembling marble that prompted the visitors to designate the impressive encampment as White City. Among the numerous world-wide associations conducting congresses was the World's Parliament of Religions. Some persons explained that the World's Parliament of Religions that assembled in Chicago in conjunction with the World's Columbian Exposition represents an historic event symbolizing the approaching post-Christian era in the United States, partly because questions were raised concerning the nature of the different religions and about the essence of religion. Especially important, the Vedanta Society, which was established by one of the distinguished participants, provided a foundation for the first Eastern religious tradition that took root on American soil and that through the American Vedantists Eastern spirituality was first taken seriously in the United States.

In the spring, 1891. the General Committee on Religious Congresses of the World's Congress Auxiliary was appointed by President Charles C. Bonney, who was active in originating and developing world conventions. The committee chairman was John Henry Barrows, the pastor serving the First Presbyterian Church in Chicago. The committee commenced their discussion with a conviction that nothing like a

World's Parliament of Religions had occurred. In June, 1891, a preleminary address circulated by the committee emphasized the creative and regulatory power exhibited by religion and requested cooperation from adherents representing the world's great religions. The committee suggested that a friendly conference composed of individuals holding strong personal convictions could be helpful in confirming religion's supreme truth and indicating the important insights that religion provides into contemporary problems. Interest in the proposed congress increased when the General Committee circulated their first report in February, 1892. A second report, containing a program for a seventeen-day conference, was published in March, 1893. The purpose was to assemble the leading representatives of the great world religions; to set forth for permanent record an accurate and authoritative account of the contemporary condition and future prospect of religion among the leading nations; to discern the significant distinctive truths contained within each religion; to indicate what and how many important truths the various religions hold in common; and to determine what insight each religion affords the other great world religions. The Parliament was planned to indicate the impregnable foundations of theism and the reason for human faith in immortality. The planners wanted to obtain from the leading scholars representing the world religions complete and accurate statements describing the effects exerted by religion upon literature, art, commerce, government, and domestic and social life. Through their deliberations the participants could determine the insight that religion provides into contemporary problems and questions about temperance, labor, education, and economic conditions. The Parliament was planned to strengthen the spirit of community among the representatives attending the congress and to draw the nations into a friendly fellowship to secure permanent world peace.

More than two years' planning and preparation preceded the World's Parliament of Religions conducted between September 11 and 28, 1893. Attracting about one hundred and fifty thoundand persons, the international congress exemplified an emerging world consciousness, prompted questions about the reunification of Christendom, encouraged reflection upon the relationship between Christianity and the non-Christian religions, emphasized natural religion, evoked enthusiastic cooperation in preparing and presenting the congress, and encouraged Christians and non-Christians to share a common fraternity. When the Parliament commenced, the Columbian Libert Bell resounded with ten strokes honoring the ten religions represented by the conferees assembled in the ivory-like houses that comprised the White City. Those who attended anticipated that the World's Parliament of Religions would exert a profound and ever-deepening impression upon religious thought, but the principal planners were not preoccupied with promoting a cosmic or universal religion.

Among the impressive personalities who attended the World's Parliament of Religions was the Swami Vivekananda, who delivered several epoch-marking speeches describing a profound world religion. During this three-year journey through the United States and Europe, Vivekananda established the Vedanta movement and started the Ramakrishna Mission, that became an international association encouraging a cultural synthesis combining Eastern and Western religion and philosophy. Vivekananda's Chicago speeches constitute a intercultural communicative break-through in East-West dialogue, introduced a universal religious-philosophical perspective blending Eastern and Western thought, and created a powerful impression that was immediate and enduring. Vivekananda's mystical humanism, constituting the teachings and system called Vedanta, exerted a powerful impact on Western culture.

Between 1893 and 1993, Chicago's, and the entire country's, religious landscape changed dramatically. Detroit, Dearborn, and East Lansing, Michigan sprouted sizeable Muslim communities. Houston grew a Hindu, Buddhist, and Muslim population connected with an emerging interfaith network. Los Angeles nurtured Buddhist temples, the Buddhist Sangha Council, an Islamic community, and an interfaith council. Similar religious diversity grew in other large cities, including Denver, Boulder, Seattle, Atlanta, Omaha, Miami, Boston, New York, Tempe, and Cedar Rapids. This multiculturalism or pluralism is illustrated by the Islamic Society of North America, the Hindu Temple Society of America, and the American Buddhist Congress.

One Jain appeared during the 1893 assembly, but several attended the 1993 meeting. The recent representative might feel comparatively comfortable in the beautiful Jain temple and center that was dedicated during the summer in nearby Bartlett, Illinois. The new facility accommodates approximately 2,500 Jains residing within the Chicago vicinity. With about 70,000 adherents living in the United States, Jainism shows the changes that have transformed America. Hindus claim a million believers in the United States, including 100,000 Hindus residing within the Chicago area. Buddhists estimate a membership numbering around 4 million in the United States, with nearly 155,000 adherents living around Chicago. Hindus and Buddhists trace their origins in the United States to the 1893 Parlament of the World's Religions. The colorful contengent of Hindu swamis who attended the recent gathering discovered more than a dozen Hindu worship places scattered across Chicago. These include the Vivekananda Center near the University of Chicago, a Hare Krishna temple in north Chicago, and a Hindu temple at nearby Lamont. His Holiness the Dalai Lama of Tibet found 28 distinct Buddhist communities ranging from a few hundred Sri Lankana and Tibetans to more than

20,000 Japanese and Vietnamese, 30,000 Koreans, 30,000 Tais, and about 1,500 American converts. Not surprising to many participants, the Nobel Peace Prize winner from Tibet highlighted the concluding plenary with an inspiring speech presented in Grant Park.

Muslins trace their beginnings in America to the 1893 Parliament of the World's Religions. At the recent assembly, the secretary general serving the World Muslin League was surrounded with the 250,000 Muslims who worship at the mosques located throughout Chicago and the suburbs. Zoroastrians have grown to an estimated 10,000 adherents in the United States, and Chicago-area believers are served by a Zoroastrian center in Hinsdale, Illinois. Two well-established groups in the United States who were absent in 1893 appeared a century afterward: the Anglicans and the Native Americans.

This pronounced diversity constituted a significance between the 1893 gathering and the 1993 Parliament. However participants involved in both parliaments pondered the same fundamental question: How do the adherents who embrace the world religions understand one another? Rich resources for answering this question, partly and tentatively, were provided by the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions through a wide variety of formal presentations, major addresses, workshops, symposia, and musical offerings. Most of the parliament's 600 programs were presented at the headquarters, the Palmer House Hilton in Chicago's loop. The international interdisciplinary conferences attracted approximately 60 scholars from around the world who comprised twenty programs. In an extraordinary session, Dr. Gerald Barney who established the Millenium Institute, challenged the participants to address the pressing social problems such as war, poverty, and the destruction of the environment. An assembly of the world's religious leaders discussed and delivered a Declaration of a Global Ethic. The summer's festivities were a celebration and a commemoration, a centennial and a challenge.

The 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions symbolized the increasing pluralism and religious diversity pervading the United States. The proceedings provided an irresistible incentive for recognizing how the religious landscape throughout America changed radically during the previous quarter-century. Almost every large American city features Islamic centers and mosques, Hindu and Buddhist temples and meditation centers, and numerous "new" religious movements. Although the 1893 Parliament of the World's Religions was predominately Christian in composition, the conference demonstrated decisively that Jewish and Catholic contengencies were mainstream movements. The first assembly was Western; the second, emphatically Eastern with strong components representing Hinduism and Buddhism. The 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions reminded American citizens that encounters between people embracing diverse religious traditions happens during the everyday experiences of many persons throughout the country. Although the 1990 census confirmed the tremendous changes of population within the nation's neighborhoods, the statistics left unexplained the religious dimensions and religious multiculturalism registered by this population shift.

Although pluralism has remained a generative stand indicating American ideology, neither diversity nor plurality alone constitute pluralism. Controversy rages concerning the important implications inherent within America's multicultural and multireligious society. How Americans appropriate plurality in creating a positive pluralism remains an enduringly significant question confronting the citizenry now and in the future. The 1993 Parliament provided an invaluable opportunity for the informative dialogue and discussion that are essential for comprehending the vastly changed religious landscape within this nation.

The international interdisciplinary academic conference that was a central component of the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions provided scholars

an almost unprecedented opportunity to conduct academic research and share their findings across the traditional disciplinary divisions. Because representatives from the world's great religions and seemingly unending "new" religious movements participated in the 1993 Parliament, academics received an increasing initiative to study their temples, mosques, gurudwaras, meditation centers, retreat centers, informal communication networds, emerging associations, established institutions, religious education, spiritual practices, encounters with other religious traditions and movements, and confrontation with civic and political institutions. An enticing invitation emerged for analyzing the response of Christian and Jewish communities to the new Hindu and Buddhist neighbors, the adaptations required by "new" religious movements within an alien culture, the development of inter-religious councils and communication networks, the provocative theological and pastoral questions developing within this pluralistic situation, and the intelligent reformulation of traditional church-state relations within an extended context. Scholars confronted the changing meanings of religious pluralism, not simply for the religious communities but for every public institution; they addressed the actual challenges and emerging opportunities arising from a growing public commitment to the pluralism represented by the flourishing religious diversity.

The international interdisciplinary academic conference, called the Academy, succeeded in challenging academics to address the important issues evoked by these constantly changing contours within America's religious experience. In contemporary American colleges and universities, the disciplines of American religion and the comparative study of religion generally attract different groups of scholars. Increasing conversation among these professionals creates a growing consciousness that the contours of the country's religious landscapes change,

and this change nurtures alterations within the paramaters of the traditional academic disciplines that these scholars profess. Even more significant, scholars conducting research in the humanistic and scientific disciplines are encouraged to study religion as a focus for intellectual inquiry and investigation. Scholars in English, comparative literature, history, philosophy, psychology, communication studies, economics, political science, physics, and anthropology become invigorated by studying Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Jain, Buddhist, Confucian, Christian, and Zoroastrian traditions, beliefs, and communities. Learning becomes almost boundless and increasingly coherent within a growing wholeness.

This intense intellectual inquiry is provoked by an increasing awareness indicating that sweeping social upheaval occasioned by a stupendous change in human knowledge has caused enormous changes in cultural patterns, value systems, and religious paragisms.[1] Serious and sustained disaffection from the ecclesiastical establishment and mainstream religion apparently happened simultaneously with the appearance of "religious alternatives" and "alternatives to religion" that some scholars designated or described as "the new religions" and "new age movements." Evidence confirming widespread dissatisfaction with historic traditions is provided by the proliferation of "new" religious movements such as Zen Buddhism, Subud, Meher Baba's followers, Transcendental meditation, Krishnamurti's students, the Vedanta movement, Humanistic Mysticism, and the Tibetan Buddhism represented by the Dalai Lama. Additional substantiation comes from public opinion surveys indicating that a growing number of Americans accept extra-sensory perception, report psychic experiences, and express an interest in contacting a deceased relative or friend. Some sociologists explain that "new" religious movements appear amid an interaction between a primal society and another society, when there exists a great desparity in power and social progress. Appearing during the sixties and called a counter culture, which some prominent cultural historians

considered as a watershed within American history, some "new" religions seemed preoccupied with eclogy, mysticism, occult symbol-systems, and feminism. Some movements gave expression to Hindu philosophy proliferating in the unconventional "counterculture," when enthusiasm for Zen Buddhism spawned a pleuthora of contemplation centers scattered across the United States. Tibetan Buddhism became ensconsed at the Nyingma Institute in Berkeley and in Chogyam Trungpa's community at Bolder.

As curious conceptions concerning "karma" and "reincarnation" infiltrated coctail conversation, unusual expressions of Eastern spirituality emerged. Psychical phenomena was interpreted as prophetic promptings and extrasensory communication. Astrology was conceived not as an isolated inquiry within ancient cultures, but as a segment within the systematic teachings that are integrated within the symbolic expressions designated as myths that Needleman described as "the language of a purified emotional perception that had as its object the great unitary intentions of the cosmos."[2] and that impart illuminating insight concerning the context of humanity's sacred purpose of self-comprehension. Inquisitive students grew interested in the communicative constructs through which esoteric teachings are expressed symbolically and mythically. Some seekers pondered how the emotions as well as the intellect produce knowledge, concluding convincingly that emotional response severed from rational relection seems sentimental and romantic and that intellectual comprehension separated from the emotions grows sterile and becomes stagnate. A revolution wrought with expanded consciousness provoked critical questions concerning the perception of "reality" and the adequacy of paradigms.

Sensing a shift in paradigms within the cultural upheaval that some writers described as a transitional time, scholars analyzed paradigms as comprehensive meaning-systems combining numerous concepts consistently within a larger perspective. Several writers pondered paradigm shifts in science, the arts, and religion. Casual observers wondered whether the contemporary cultural crises was caused by or simply reflected these constantly changing conditions. Examining the process by which new scientific paradigms replace their predecessors, Kuhn explaimed that any new interpretation of nature, whether a discovery or a theory, emerges initially in the mind of one or a few individuals; Kuhn stated that "the new paradigm, or a sufficient hint to permit later articulation, emerges all at once, sometimes in the middle of the night, in the mind of a man deeply emmirsed in crisis."[3] Kuhn described a paradigm as a universally recognized scientific achievement that momentarily provides model problems and solutions to a community of practitioners. Each scientific revolution alters the historical perspective embraced by that community. Resulting transitions to a new paradigm constitute a scientific revolution, which Kuhn described as non-cumulative developmental episodes in which an older paradigm is replaced completely or partly with an incompatible new paradigm. Following a revolution, scientists respond to a new world; hence when paradigms change, the world is perceived differently. Transferral of allegiance from paradigm to paradigm constitutes a conversion experience that people accept voluntarily with passing time.

Studying artistic revolutions, Clignet questioned whether revolutions in scientific and artistic systems present similar structures and determinants.[4]

Although contrasting the rationality of the creative process in scientific endeavor with the supposedly irrationality in creative inspiration happens sometimes, Clignet concluded that the structures of artistic and scientific pursuits occassionally appear analagous. Revolutions are incited in the artistic world by the discontinuities that are revealed through passing time to an analyst. The author contended that any artistic communication entails a dialectical interaction between an artist, the public, and the work that is presented for scrutiny; studying artistic revolutions consists in discovering how paradigmatic shifts represent changes transpiring in the dialectical relations between nature and culture. Clignet described revolutions as constructs that are elaborated during a process of confirming or invalidating claims that artists or audiences formulate regarding the properties of their creations or judgments. Successful scientific revolutions change the perception of an entire discipline, but successful artistic revolutions exert limited impact. Like scientific counterparts, artistic revolutions transcend the boundaries between creativity and nature.

Studying theology, Kung defined a paradigm as a complete constellation of convictions, values, and techniques shared by members within a given community.[5] From an historical perspective, Christianity is interpreted as a succession of paradigms. Kung explained that contemporary persons experience a paradigm shift during which one theological paradigm becomes replaced with another paradigm. New theories and hypotheses result from highly complex and generally protracted replacement of one paradigm by another paradigm through a change occurring within a larger process that is neither completely rational nor completely irrational. Frequently the change is more revolutionary than evolutionary.

Kung observed that discoveries and anomalies that endanger an established paradigm initially are dismissed; however new paradigms giving different theological interpretations arise when inadequate paradigms collapse; the replacement of a paradigm is generally preceded with a transitional period. Kung recognized that an emerging paradigm attracts few adherents, usually young advocates. The theologian explained that new explanatory paradigms become absorbed into existing paradigms; the new paradigm prevails and replaces the previous paradigm; or prevailing conditions resist radically new paradigm. Kung stated that a fundamental continuity occurrs in every paradigm change.

In a strikingly similar way in which Kuhn and Kung describe paradigm change, a committee report from an American denomination concluded during the sixties that religious revolutions develop when intense mental confusion and strong psychological unsettlement are absorbed within a profoundly concerned person who discovers an inner resource greater than the difficulty confronting society. An exceptionally sensitive individual assimilates the confusion, transcends these exigences with an illuminating insight, and articulates a creditable explanation. The reported explained:

> Almost all theologies have their roots in the experience of one who has been capable of taking into himself much of the confusion, pain, and disorder of the times and transcending them and all that would demean, depress, or destroy self. With overwhelmment and transcendence come insights and illuminations, which is to say religious experience. An invariable and inseparable accompaniment of such experience is the rationale, on the part of the illuminated one, that serves as an explanation of his experience. It is his attempt to see the illumination for what it is; also to express what has happened to him in words, imagery, the arts, in such wise as will give others not merely an idea but also a taste, a glimpse, a feel of what has come to him. Thus it is that the rationale partakes eminently of aesthetic communication. 6

An especially interesting analysis is presented by Ellwood, whose Alternative Altars: Unconventional and Eastern Spirituality in the United States was among the earliest studies to consider these movements as a uniquely vital and coherent religion. Ellwood distinguished between the "temple paradigm" representing mainstream religion and the "cave paradigm" representing ancient initiatory mysteries. Ellwood explained that an "excursus tradition" provides implicit models for the structure and the philosophy of emergent religious groups:

> If emergent religion is the alternative to which those who turn away from established religion of the temple have recourse, their journeys are individual excursions. If the emergent religious tradition has certain unifying themes, and a hidden history which shows continuities among its many manifestations past and present, for each voyager the journey is unique and solitary because it enacts a personal subjective quest.[7]

If the "temple paradigm" represents subscription to conventional creeds and enrollment of a person into the ecclesiastical establishment, the "cave paradigm" indicates an excursion or pilgrimage. In another significant study, Ellwood distinguished between the emissary or ethical prophet bearing a burning message demanding repentance, and the exemplary prophet who is filled from within with a divine fullness, having undertaken a quest seeking the Platonic sources of religion.[8] Hence a different conception of religion is grounded in paradigms communicated by exemplary prophets and paradigms communicated by emissary prophets. Ellwood observed that emerging religious movements provide a barometer registering changes in the psychological predispositions of a significant segment within the population, and described these "new" religions as harbingers heralding a new Helenistic dispensation. Ellwood concluded that a new type of religious personality is arising in the West, resembling the exemplary prophet.

Speculation about paradigm shifts in scientific, artistic, and religious endeavors are relevant to communication scholars analyzing revitalization movements arising during times of social stress and spearheaded by a prophet espousing a novel interpretation of traditional religion[9] Revitalization movements represent attempts to construct satisfactory paradigms and are regarded as providing solutions to social-cultural discontent.

Recognizing the intercultural communication within the emerging religions, Miller and Shatzer challenged communication analysts to establish an intellectual and emotional foundation undergirding a "world humanism," which these authors describe as a common concern to promote an international perspective.[10] Realizing that the intricately interconnected, rapidly changing world requires that archaic paradigms be altered, Kim encouraged a psychological orientation called "intercultural personhood," an identity embracing Eastern and Westerm traditions.[11]

Studying paradigm shifts and information infusion provides an opportunity to perceive deeper insights and important relationships between seemingly unrelated disciplines. In The Tao of Physics: An Exploration of the Parallels Between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism, Capra discusses modern physics, describes Eastern mysticism, and them discerned parallels between these approaches to reality.[12] Zukav's The Dancing Wu Li Masters: An Overview of the New Physics analyzes quantum physics and relativity, but the writer emphasizes the relationships between physics and Eastern philosophies.[13] While traditional academic disciplines professed in American colleges and universities attempt to compartmentalize knowledge into specific specializations, an emerging scholarship becomes inherently interdisciplinary.

Beside an unceasing quest for a viable paradigm, another immediate incentive for inaugurating an international interdisciplinary academic conference within the 1993 Parliament is the emergence of the "new" religious movements.

Participants attending the awesone event saw thousands of people exhibiting a colorful rainbow containing countless dazzling hues. Attendees wore saffron robes, white mantles, scarlet saris, multi-colored gowns, Nehru jackets, and conventional western clothes. Some attendees indicated an affiliation with the "new" religious movements appearing in western culture, especially the Vedanta Society, the Theosophical Society, and the Aurobindo Association. Arriving early every morning, the delegates and representatives observed Jews in tefillin, Moslems kneeling on prayer rugs, contemplative Buddhists, devotees congested into the crowded corridors demonstrating yoga practices, adherents chanting ancient mantras, and hundreds gathered in the grand ballroom pursuing tai-chi. The participants attending the 1993 Parliament heard chanting and prayers, gongs and bells, trumpets and drums. The air was enriched with the fragrances of flowers and herbs, the auroma of incense and candles, the scent of perfunes and curry. These spiritually inclined individuals, embracing ancient religions and accepting "new" religions, gathered from around the entire earth to listen and question, confront conflict and develop dialogue, hear impassioned speeches and appreciate the silence. Most taught each other and learned from one another. Within this highly variegated mosaic, the colorful collage composed from citizens from every continent resembled infinitely precious jewels sparkeling with an indescribable radiance. For the first time in a century, Zoroastrians and Baha'is, Theosophists and Jains, Shintos and Sikhs, secularists and neo-pagans, indigenous and Hare Krishnas, brought their bouquets to a universal religious community in which all were one.

Members from the global spiritual community representing fifty-six nations and over one-hundred twenty-five religious and inter-religious associations assembled under the same rood during an epoch-marking event that some reporters described as "the world's largest and most diverse gathering." The spectrum seemed complete: adherents from the traditional world religions sat side by side with devotees embracing the "new" religious movements. This colorful diversity provided a physical reminder that Chicago, an enormously pluralistic religious community perhaps without equal in the United States, has more Tai Buddhists than Episcopalians, and more Muslims than Jews. As the 1893 Parliament provided a showcase for exhibiting the Hindus, the Buddhists, and The Baha'is, so the 1993 Parliament gave prominence to the "new" religious movements, such as the Self-Realization Fellowship and the Aurobindo Association.

In the United States preceeding the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions, especially during the turbulent nineteen-sixties and -seventies, interesting and important movements emerged that scholars described as "new" religious movements. From Golden Gate Park in San Francisco to Greenwich Village in New York City, members constituting an unconventional counterculture dawned minstrel garb, jester clothing, Indian blankets, and safrin Zen robes. Chanting ancient sutras and Buddhist mantras, wearing Adamic Hair with Indian headbands or brightly colored love-beads, these "hippies"smoked marijuana, ingested psychedelic drugs, challenged the ecclesiastical establishment, and professed a preference for love and peace. Some read the writings of Alan Watts; others were captivated with the experiments and demonstrations conducted by Timothy Leary; a few enjoyed the novels from Hermann Hesse. These unorthodox, unregimented "hippies" dramatized a qualatative experience discovered through expanded consciousness, transcendental

meditation, and psychedelic experimentation. Restless within twentieth-century technological civilization, wandering "hippies" and playful flower-children embraced the traditions of contemplative Orientals, studied ancient writings from Tibetan Lamaists, and celebrated the electrical vibrations from Eastern musicians. Harper wrote:

> A group of young people, wearing long pieces of yellow cloth thrown around one shoulder, chanting "Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Hare Hare" to the accompaniment of drum-beat on a street in Boston; a dozen students on a university campus in Atlanta, sitting on the floor before a large picture of a man, chanting "Meher Baba ki jai"; five hundred people attending a Spiritual Unity of Nations Seminar in Detroit; a Spiritual Master holding an audience spellbound in Washington, D.C.; a large Vedanta publishing house in Hollywood - these are only a few of the evidences that "Hunduism has invaded America," 14

Seeking meaning, freedom, and creativity through a drug-induced ecstasy that some observers compared to a super-Eucharistic psychedelic ritural or a medieval monk's mystical musings, bearded, sandal-wearing "hippies" savored epistemic experiences that yielded alternative life-styles, fresh value-systems, and different world-views. Challenging the dominating scientific orientation and objective reasoning, these innovative celebrants embraced a visionary experience that Roszak described:

> In contrast, the beauty of the magical vision is the beauty of the deeply sensed, sacramental presence. The perception is not one of order, but of power. Such experience yields no sense of accomplished and rounded-off knowledge, but, on the contrary, it may begin and end in an overwhelming sense of mystery. We are awed, not informed. 15

Confronting a sophisticated scientific technocracy, these "hippies" sensed that humans become estranged from essential sources-of-meaning when non-rational experiences such as wonder, mystery, and awe are suppressed within a scientifically-disciplined culture. Decrying the cultural sterility plaguing suburbia and the rampant anomie that haunts metropolis, these dissidents claimed that rootlessness grows when persons are severed from authentic selfhood and personal identity and that

estrangement flourishes when individuals feel themselvers severed within themselves and from meaningful interpersonal relationships. Celebrating expanded consciousness, higher reas", non-intellectual experience, creative human liberation, compassionate community, and enriched living, the counterculture nurtured face-to-face relationships, renounced traditionally-structured roles within nuclear famalies, resisted confinement within tightly-structured employment systems. Emphasizing not simply how humans know but how persons should live, these hippies expressed their conviction that human sociability through expanded awareness and communal sharing should supersede humanity's technological development. This growing conviction was given a creative emotional expression which Reich called a veritable "greening of America."[16]

Roszak remarked:

> Yet it was a generation of mind-blown hippies and flower children, walking through the world as if with eyes on some other reality, who opened the Aquarian frontier and made it a visible social fact, a live option for the millions....Playfully casting off their middle-class, suburban identities, they became Zen Buddhists, American Indians, Hindu sadhakas, witches and warlocks, gypsies of the open road, street freaks (and, along other lines, people's warriors and enemies of the state). 17

As unusual ideas about "karma" and "reincarnation" infiltrated popular discussion, different philosophical concepts appeared with which Eastern religion was communicated. Psychical phenomenona was pondered as prophetic promptings; herbal and homeopathic medicine was studied as a remedy respecting an integrative intelligence working within physical bodies and with organic nature. Astrology was described as a segment withinin systematic teachings communicated through myth that provided what Needleman called "the language of a purified emotional perception that had as its object the great unitary intentions of the cosmos" and that imparted insight about "the context of man's divine mission of self-perfection through the service of God."[18]

Seeking simple styles, some flower-children prefered natural food, practiced organic farming, pursued crafts such as pottery and weaving, and established communes during a countercultural revolution that Prebish pondered:

> In an age of mass media, data input systems, and intensified social fluidity, America flexes its collective muscles in the search for human completeness amidst Theodore Roszak's projected "Wasteland," and an overwhelming (and perhaps alarming) variety of alternatives appear in the social, cultural, and religious spheres: alternative marriage, styles to combat the alarming (and constantly rising) divorce rate, electronic music and computerized art forms to tantalize the avant-garde, and esoteric cults promoted by self-styled gurus of the "pop" scene. 19

Speaking in 1976, Harvard professor Cox wondered whether persons had permitted Christianity and Judaism to become so identified with accumulation, profit, and success that the emergence of Eastern spirituality was required to remind contemporary individuals than an alternative life-style "is not built on accumulating profit, prosperity, success, and degrees, but has at its core a certain kind of simplicity and plainness of living."[20]

If an interest in the "new" religious movements provided an important incentive for inaugurating an international interdisciplinary academic conference within the 1993 Parliament, then certainly the Parliament of the World's Religions that gathered in Chicago during 1993 was a significant stimulus for studying these unconventional movements and untraditional persuasions. A prominent precedent for examining the "new" religious movements in the United States was provided especially by Professor Jacob Needleman, when this scholar published The New Religions and Understanding the New Religions. Since the appearance of these two books, numerous scholarly papers analyzing these movements have been presented at academic conferences sponsored by the American Academy of Religion and the Religious Speech Communication Association. Scholars have struggled persistently to define and describe these innovative movements that are interpreted generally as registering dissatisfaction with the ecclesiastical establishment in America. Turner described these "new" religious movements as "those which arise in the interaction of a primal society with another society where there is a great disparity of

power or sophistication."[21] According to Wilson, the distinctive characteristics of new religious movements are exotic provenance, new cultural life-style, a level of engagement markedly different from that of traditional church Christianity, charismatic leadership, a following predominately young and drawn in disproportionate measure from the better-educated and middle class sections of society, social conspiciety, international operation, and emergence within the last decade and a half.[22] Ellwood confined the term to groups germinated during the yeasty spiritual ferment of the sixties, described that decade as a watershed in American life, and explained that non-normative religion during the sixties gained a special quality from an association with the youth culture or counterculture.[23] Ellwood evoked remembrances that "young people raised in the white-picket-fence suburbs of the Eisenhower era were doing strange things: going East, being swept away by totalistic groups that amounted to surrogate families, rejecting science and patriotism to create a chasmic 'generation gap'."[24] This scholar encouraged cross-cultural studies analyzing new religious movements to illumine contemporary spiritual life in the United States. The 1993 Parliament provided an unprecedented opportunity to experience some of these movements within the common Chicago context.

An extensive literature describing the new religions indicates that examining these contemporary movements almost inevitably entails international intercultural communication and information-infusion nurturing an emerging universal humanistic religion.

Based upon the 1930 Hibbert Lectures presented at Manchester College, Oxford, Tagore's The Religion of Man contains the epistemic claim that through yoga persons transcend their humanity and discover themselves conscious of unity with Parabrahman.

The world-renown Indian poet-artist and winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature described himself as neither a scholar nor a philosopher and attested that "my religion is a poet's religion, and neither that of an orthodox man of piety nor that of a theologian."[25] In lectures delivered during 1936-1938 and published subsequently as Eastern Religions and Western Thought, the brilliant Indian philosopher-statesman Radhakrishnan realized that the most revolutionary changes in human history happened during the preceding fifty years; for the first time, inhabitants of the earth became a single interdependent whole and gained awareness of that unity.[26] Radhakrishnan stated that the great periods in human history are marked by widespread access of spirituality derived from fusing national cultures with foreign influences; the writer said that the wisdom and spirit of the previous forms penetrait the successors and inspire the gradual evolution of the purpose of history. Believing that human destiny depends upon rapidly assimilating the qualities associated with mystic Eastern religions, he envisioned an emerging philosophy combining the finest European humanism with Asian religion, endowed with greater spiritual and ethical power; he foresaw a new humanism emphasizing mystical experience and already embraced by the majority of contemporary intellectuals. When Northrop's pioneering and perceptive The Meeting of East and West appeared in 1924, the author was among the earliest Americans who understood and appreciated the importance of Eastern culture for Western civilization and to comprehend and communicate the enormous potential exerted by Buddhism, meditation, martial arts, yoga, and Oriental art.[27] Among the first "comprehensive" historical surveys describing American religious experience that mentioned non-traditional groups was Ahlstrom's A Religious History of the American People. Appearing in 1972, the Yale

historian's book described the deflection from Western religious traditions as a major sign of the time, marked a significant shift in scholarship by acknowledging religions outside the Judeao-Christian movements, described a syncretic tendency to incorporate all historical religions within a single expression, and observed the trend among Western religions to relate themselves positively with Eastern religions. Ahlstrom said that American interest in Oriental wisdon increased when Transcendentalism appeared; Emerson and Thoreau were among the most prominent prophets.[28]

Writing in 1977, Cox chronicled an increasing interest among Americans in Eastern spirituality that he described as unprecedented in scope and intensity, unconfined to "intellectuals," and stressing pragmatic practices rather than theological doctrines. He questioned whether the Eastern religion emerging during the nineteen-seventies succeeded the psychedelic upsurge that developed a decade earlier, and Cox was intrigued with "the frequent assertion by people who had taken psychedelic drugs that their drug experience sharply undercut the credibility of any form of 'Western' faith-vision and made some sort of 'Eastern' religious world view the only credible one."[29] The Harvard professor explained that introducing Oriental spirituality into America because consumer culture and psychological individualism constitutes a distorting cultural barrier; the resultant Western prismatic refraction of Eastern spirituality comprises a completely different pattern that exerts neither the impact from a genuine alternative vision nor the critical potential implicit in biblical faith, but supporting the isolated, competitive Western ego which Eastern spirituality should undermine. Cox claimed that American's willingness to change their common life must precede their capacity to perceive and comprehend Eastern teachings correctly; that the Western spiritual crisis will not be solved with religious importations but through returning to primal spiritual roots; and that eventually Oriental spiritual disciplines will

create a profound contribution to Western civilization.[30] Writing in 1988, Cox indicated that contemporary individuals have an opportunity for experiencing a larger ecumenism than previous generations, although he criticized the artificiality and superficiality with which American consumers "approach Eastern religious movements like capricious shoppers pushing their carts from one aisle to another, unable to slack their spiritual gluttony."[31] Cox emphasized the possibilities for interreligious dialogue:

> Not only do we live on a spiritually multiplex globe, but nearly every continent, nation, and city is itself increasingly pluralistic. As a result of nineteenth-century Christian missionary activity,worldwide migration patterns, and the spread of Asian religious practices in the West, previous "spheres of influence" arrangements no longer work. Everyone is now everywhere. There are native-born Presbyterians in Cambodia; third-generation Buddhists in the United States; and Hindu temples in the Caribbean.[32]

Examining the emerging Western religious movements, Cox concluded that their popularity attests a pattern of dislocation and alienation among some affluent young Americans whom he described as "victims of apainful overload of contradictions between the stated Christian and universalist value system of society, on the one hand, and its actual capitalist utilitarian modus operande, on the other."[33] Cox predicted that during the future, the perennial problems of human meaning and personal responsibility will be discussed in the categories derived from the great religious traditions; that the most significant questions must be decided using premises which have no empirical evidence; and that these persistent perplexities will guide sincere seekers ultimately to those strata of human reality where person's primal apprehensions and aspirations are experienced in myth and symbols that remain the exclusive sources of wisdom.

Among the earliest and finest scholars who considered unconventional spitituality in the United States as one uniquely vital and coherent tradition, USC professor Ellwood bequeathed an enormous contribution to scholarly analyses on "new" religions.

In Religious and Spiritual Groups in Modern America Ellwood distinguished between "emissary" or "ethical" prophets and "exemplary" prophets when he explained that the former is an envoy communicating a burning message for salvation or reform while the latter contains a divine fullness having searched for the Platonic sources. Hence different communicative strategies are employed for religions that are grounded in cosmic wonder and communicated by the exemplary personalities, and those grounded in revelation within history and emissary communication.[34] The author advised that a distinctively different spirituality arises in contemporary America:

> The new spiritual man is more like the kind of person we have heretofore associated with the East - or with cultists. He presumes without question that God or spiritual reality, if it is to be found, is to be found within through expanded states of consciousness which penetrate like searchlights toward the deep floor of being. Interior exploration is his main concern. He is suspicious of words and verbal communication. He is disenchanted with sermons, lectures, and disquisitions, but is highly sensitive to nonverbal communication and the lessons of meditation....The new spiritual man's social concern is for an organic, ecological harmony of humankind with the cosmos in subtle interaction.[35]

Ellwood indicated that an American subculture has created religious expressions that do not merely reproduce or export the great non-Western religions, that these emerging movements are not normatively Judaeo-Christian, and that groups are concerned with "ultimate transformation" and express themselves through myths, doctrines, worship, and social structures. Usually the new religious movement has a single leader who expresses a rearranged symbol-system and style through personality, addresses the deepest latent intentions within the listeners, and perceives possible patterns that appropriate integrated value within everything having independent value by reinterpreting a shattered cosmos. In Alternative Altars; Unconventional and Eastern Spirituality in America Ellwood maintained that occult, mystical, and Eastern movements in America represent a frequently unseen but continuously dynamic segment within American religious experience and history.[36]

New England Transcendentalism, Ellwood explained, has done the most to legitimate these comprehensive alternative spiritualities and present paradigms for their domestication.[37] In an outstanding anthology containing primary sources, Eastern Spirituality in America: Selected Writings, the editor documented how Eastern spirituality exercises an important influence upon American culture and provides valuable religious alternatives. Diffusion of Eastern religion seems facilitated by three Western mindsets: romanticism inducing a pantheistic glow, the Western occult tradition with Hellenistic foundations, and empirical science that resists arbitrary authority. Among the characteristics of Eastern religions in the United States are their fairly fluid structure centered upon a charismatic personality, intellectual expression of a pantheistic universalism emphasizing the divine within, intensity of experience grounded in practice and philosophy, and direct participatory experience in worship. Ellwood said that the charismatic leader is

> (a) the founder or living teacher of the group, (b) recipient of a special call or initiation upon which the group is based, (c) uniquely qualified to teach or impart a special technique for spiritual experience, such as a method of meditation, chanting, or devotion, (d) uniquely entitled to call and empower disciples to which this authority may be passed, and (e) the object of a special devotion, in line with the Eastern tendency to blend freely the sacred and the teacher of the sacred, so that the charismatic teacher, or after death his portrait or image and relics, is offered quasi-divine honors. 38

Ellwood identified three specific periods within the historical institutionalization of Eastern religion in America for Occidentals: a period of verbal and intellectual emphasis based upon reading books and hearing lectures, a period characterized by the charismatic personality or living teacher, and a period of disassociation with

conventional religion. Ellwood's informative introduction in Choquette's New Religious Movements in the United States and Canada presents nine categories within which new movements might be classified.[39]

Although Harper stated that the new religions that venerate Hindu gods and saints were introduced in the United States by Swami Vivekananda and Swami Yogananda,[40] his Gurus, Swamis, and Avataras contains biographical sketches of eight other persons.

SFSU professor Needlemen described the "new" religions as a revolution striking the established Western institutions, a spiritual phenomenon promising to transform everything Westerners have thought about God and human possibility, and a powerful influence compelling Western consciousness to examine itself in a manner unprecedented since the Scientific Revolution.[41] Needleman suggests that perhaps the entire Western conception of religion will be changed by an inwardness encouraged by Eastern spirituality, and the San Francisco scholar stated that "what today is generally accepted as Judaeo-Christian doctrine may bear little or no resemblance to the mystical, practical core of our traditions wherein they often exhibit an outstanding similarity to the religions of the East."[42] The author asserts that the new religions do not endanger the established religious institutions, unless the reassessment of humanity's inward potential comprises a threat. Needleman concluded that comprehending Eastern spirituality conveys the convictions that a central characteristic of Western religion is a diminishing underestimation of human intelligence, that intellectual inquiry becomes seriously inept without essential disciplime provided spiritual techniques, and that Westerners must change their concept of reality by accepting their inherent attunement with the magical and abandoning the myth about objective consciousness. Needleman maintained that the "new" religions secure significance and vitality from the arrival in America of

"certain unusual men from the East who have brought with them practical teachings and forms of organization, each of which in its own way is not only new to the West, but new to the world."[43] The author observed:

> Just as the Torah had its "fence" and just as Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables, the founders of these movements, each in his own way, attempts to direct their communications to the more intuitive side of man, what we shall later speak of as "the intelligence of the heart."
>
> The new teachings thus present themselves in ways that resist conceptual formulation. One obvious reason for this is their intense emphasis on practice and method, and their mistrust of the isolated intellect. 44

In a substantive anthology that Needleman and Baker edited, Capps contended that the significance and power exerted by the "new" religions will be missed until new and adequate research methodologies are developed; he professed that "new" religion cannot emerge until ways are discovered for discussing these movements and that the essential methodological transformation necessitates challenging the Enlightenment doctrine that symbols, beliefs, and ceremonies can be comprehended by dissecting these constructs. Capps cautioned:

> Because new religion is in the process of formulation, it cannot be penetrated by methodologies trained upon the permanent and static. If permanence is regarded as being normative, the sense of new religion's protean, dynamic character will be missed.[45]

Roszak renounced studying religion "like some quaint fossil whose structure and uncertain structure are now at last to receive expert analysis" from "specialists who can dissect their subject matter from every imaginable angle" and who "rush forward to crucify it with questionnaires."[46] Stone recommended developing an interdisciplinary "psychology of knowledge" supplementing the well-established "philosophy of science" and "sociology of knowledge."[47] Hargrove proposed placing the "new" religions along a continuum ranging from "integrative" religion characterized by strong organization specific myths and rituals, and definite behavorial

expectations, to "transformative" religion that emphasizes interpersonal relationships, openness in formulating myths and rituals, and individual freedom that accommodates idiosyncracies and interpretations.[48] Ellwood admonished researchers that examining "new" religious movements seriously requires approaching them as symbol-systems:

> Symbols are the core of religion; their ability to carry at once meanings on many levels and even meanings in paradoxical relation to each other is one with religion's sense of mystery and transcendence, and its simultaneous expression in several media. 49

Ellwood explained that sacred symbols always have a past, that they are discovered but not invented; symbols can change meaning markedly and play innumerable roles; but they are slowly born and seldom die. Vividly Ellwood described "new" religion:

> An emergent religion, then, is one which appears suddenly and unexpectedly, in a light which makes it stand out from the sea of established religion, like a new volcanic island or a rock revealed by an unusually low tide, and which, though it may be a result of an understandable process and even something which in a sense was there all along, gives an appearance of novelty and contrasts strikingly with the surrounding spiritual milieu. 50

Although Baker recognized a crucial difference in orientation between Eastern and Western religion without elaborating extensively upon these epistemological distinctions, and although these distinct differences are critical for researchers developing adequate research methodologies, he wrote nevertheless:

> Western man's knowledge of history is the litmus paper that shows his contact with Cosmic Intelligence. Concomitantly, Western science has required a dualistic frame of reference or epistemology, one in which a sharp division was to be made between the subject and the object of knowledge, between the Self that knows and the Not-Self that is known. In contrast, Eastern man has taken his capacity for personal Enlightenment as the primary evidence of his capacity to be moved by the same Spirit of Truth. For this reason, the great traditions of Asia have tended to be socio-psychologically oriented and pantheistic in their spiritual outlooks. Eastern science has required only a monistic epistemology, for the principles that govern the object of empirical investigation are to be discovered in the consciousness of the researcher.[51]

Predicated predominately upon Enlightenment presuppositions, contemporary research methodologies for studying the new religions appear inappropriate.

While these scholars in Religious Studies acknowledged these inadequacies, scholars in Speech Communicated constructed innovative methodologies to analyzing contemporary rhetorical-communicative movements.[52] Stewart, Smith, and Denton observed that periodic social movements have provided the impetus for nearly all important socio-political change; that a social movement might be described as an uninstitutionalized collectively sufficiently extensive in scope that proposes or opposes persuasively a program for social change and is encountered by an established order; and that public speakers are an important form of social movement persuasion although they are neither the most prevalent nor necessarily the most effective. Social movements, these scholars recognized, may change over a period of time and contain both radical and moderate elements, appear "to be strange mixtures of vagueness and precision, to borrow from old systems while espousing the new, to be both flexible and inflexible, to be static and ever-changing, and to be consistent and contradictory."[53]

Some scholars evaluate new religious movements and present predictions about their survival. In Zaretsky and Leone's Religious Movements in Contemporary America, Wilson emphasized that serious study of American religion that neglects marginal movements is fundamentally flawed.[54] Eister recognized that

> anything which disturbs or challenges not merely belief systems but the fundamental elements or units of the framework in which belief-systems are formed - in which "meanings" are sought or orientations communicated - must be expected to have consequences of the most profound order, including among many others the stimulation or even provocation of cult interest, cult movements, and cult activity.[55]

Realizing that the entire system of cultural patterns and of institutions for

creating and maintaining discourse have encountered startling challenges and profoundly dislocative discoveries, Eister commends that scholars should seek the structural sources of dislocation within communicative and orientational institutions.[56] In Glock and Bellah's The New Religious Consciousness, Wuthnow remarked that the "new" religious movements clearly comprise a noteworthy force in American religion, that a sizeable minority within the United States are aware and attracted, that countercultural groups "appear to be part of a larger shift away from traditional religious commitments and toward some new, yet undefined, mode of religious expression," and that these groups "are not simply a reflection of religious unrest, however, but are part of a broader wave of experimentation with countercultural life-styles and social arrangements."[57] Discovering four specific stages within American religious transformation between 1820 and 1860, Prichard explained that social and economic changes undermined established religion, new theological perspectives and religious practices emerged, numerous sects appeared, and the religious upheaval culminated in developing new religion that realigned religion and society.[58] In Bromley and Hammond's The Future of New Religious Movements, Melton maintained that "the United States and the West are experiencing a large-scale movement of both people and religion from East to West, a movement with the potential to reshape the Western religious scene as significantly as nineteenth-century Christianity reshaped Africa and the Orient."[59] Menton said that the "new" religious groups have appeared in America for at least a century and a half, that they have grown steadily in size and influence, and that the prime resource for alternative religions is traditional Asian religion. Johnson speculated that no one predicted the changed climate that nurtured "new" religion, and no one

can predict with certainty their future.[60] Hammond speculated that two centuries of religious change in the United States have fostered increasing possibilities for individual choice among alternatives in a pluralistic society, that the "new" religious movements have provided an opportunity for a counterculture to germinate, that one consequence will be a more variegated culture, and that another likely consequence is the steady erosion of long-standing mainline denominations through legal decision-making.[61]

Some scholars analze the psychologically persuasive techniques of conversion, brainwashing, and deprogramming. Bromley, Hadden, and Hammond reported that societal hostility has been directed against "new" religious movements and scholars making efforts to study these movements, that converts enter these groups through various routes that cannot be understood until the concept of brainwashing becomes jettisoned, and that evidence does not support the conclusion that cult leaders exert hypnotic power.[62] In Strange Gods: The Great American Cult Scare, Bromley and Shupe correct the misunderstanding that cults are mysterious, comparatively unknown, and comprehended by their critics. In an outstanding independent assessment analyzing the criticism against unconventional religion, these authors claim that the contemporary controversy concerning cults constitutes "one of the bitterest and most significant religious conflicts of the twentieth century,"[63] that at stake might be not simply the cults' destiny but religious freedom and civil liberties, and that "the campaign against the new religions is better understood as the product of the anticultists' interests rather than as a civic crusade to save the rest of us from a dark, evil conspiracy."[64] Assisting in protecting and preserving the First Amendment freedoms guaranteed the adherents embracing "unconventional religion" remains "unfinished business" from the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions.

In summation, an unceasing search for a viable paradigm and the development of the "new" religious movements" gave a significant initiative for developing the Academy as an inherent part of the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions.

Further, striking differences exhibited by scholarly participants in these two parliaments indicate an unmistakable improvement. Assessing the contributions emanating from the 1893 gathering, Joseph M. Kitagawa concluded a decade ago that this extraordinary religious assemby exerted two principal enduring effests; the Parliament gave a strong stimulus for studying comparative religion and marked the beginnings of contemporary inter-religious dialogue.[65] The 1993 centennial evoked an eloquent expression confirming this continuing contribution. While some scholars acknowledged the influence imparted by the 1893 Parliament for studying comparative religion, few academics have appreciated the incentive arising from studying comparative religion in creating the 1893 Parliament. While academics attending the original assembly recognized "the scientific study of religion," many attending the centennial parliament were concerned with the limitations in scientific methodologies for analyzing religion. During the later nineteenth-century, chairman John Henry Barrows and several colleagues concluded that the august assembly would provide a powerful impetus for studying comparative religion. Sometimes ignored has been the realization that comparative religion, however immature in its intellectual maturation, gave a crucial incentive in formulating and administering the 1893 Parliament of the World's Religions.[66] Two primary promoters who developed the original parliament, Charles Carroll Bonney and Barrows, expressed their personal, persistent fascination with this emerging academic discipline. Barrows recognized the development of comparative religious studies that gave an important incentive for inaugurating the 1893 Parliament. From the perspective provided by a passing century, an observer can conclude

that comparative religion gave an incentive for inaugurating the 1893 Parliament and that the 1893 Parliament provided a strong stimulus for nurturing comparative religion.[67]

A continuing impression is that scholars' involvement in the initial parliament was a haphazard happenstance. As the historic happening approached, members serving on the planning committee expressed their enthusiasm that the academic community and the religious contengencies were intensely interested in papricipating in the proposed congress. F. Max Muller, Cornelius Petrus Tiele, and two prominent European scholars who professed comparative religion, Eugene Goblet d'Alviella from Belgium and Otto Pfleiderer from Germany, accepted nominal membership on the planning committee. However the relationship that developed between the academic community and the religious groups grew persistently problematic. Although the ten specifically stated objectives for the assembly endorsed the participation of leading scholars representing the different non-Christian religions, Barrows afterwards acknowledged that the parliament's purpose was not to summons scholarly specialists because their participation wound undermine the proceedings. Although sophisticated scholarship pervaded the planning and preparation for the 1893 Parliament, technical and pedantic scholarship was deliberately deemphasized. Although an abundant ambiguity surrounded the terms, "scholarship" and "technical scholarship," greater clarity and controversy arose between participants who "pursued a scientific study of religion" and those who professed religious affirmations. However numerous professors who attended the 1893 Parliament were representatives from their different denominations; some were scholarly specialists steeped in "Comparative Religion" and "History of Religions"; and most academics subscribed to the motto posed for the proceedings, to unite religion against irreligion and demonstrate the marvelous religious progress

that developed during the nineteenth century.

However some practitioners pursuing "scientific studies" remained unwilling to embrace the religious parliament's raison d'etre. Some scholars discerned within the deliberations a definited encouragement and a particular danger. The gathering presented an encouragement by demonstrating that some earlier intolerance and previous impatience had been overcome and a danger that developed when some scholars professing comparative religion became associated with programs for promoting world peace and inter-religious understanding. The idealistic aspirations and soaring expectations associated with the Chicago assembly were not identical inevitably with the purposes promoted by the world-renown European universities, where the "scientific study" examining religion was gradually developing. Preceding, during, and after the 1893 Parliament, some scholars persistently remained aloof from such gatherings, contending that, regardless of generating an increasing inter-religious understanding, the "scientific study" of religion required that their "pursuit of truth" not be compromised within the context of a world-wide congress. The problematic participation of professors was indicated by the three most renown scholars professing comparative religion who contributed academic papers. These three prominent European scholars were Albert Reville from the College de France, Tiele from the University of Leiden, and Muller from Oxford University. Other distinguisged Europeans who professed the academic discipline were Conrad von Orelli from Basel, Jean Reville from the Sorbonne, Leon Marillier from England, Charles Joseph de Harlez from Louvain, and J. Estlin Carpenter from Oxford. Among the American professors specializing in this scholarly discipline and participating in the 1893 Parliament were George Park Fisher, a church historian

from Yale University, George S. Goodspeed, a comparative religionists from the University of Chicago, and C.H. Toy, a professor of Hebrew and Oriental languages from Harvard University. Addresses analyzing comparative religion were given by five additional Americans who were not "professional specialists" pursuing comparative religion. Among these sixteen specific authors, as Ziolkowski reported, nine professors, including the eight European scholars, never attended the 1893 Parliament.[68] Instead, they simply sent their papers to be read in their absence. Muller stated subsequently that his absence was among the greatest regrets accumulated during his lifetime. Almost three dozen additional speakers who participated in the 1893 Parliament were affiliated with academic institutions; however the small company of scholars professing comparative religion who actually addressed the assembly was not as prestigious as the citation of contributing authors might suggest. An important impact from comparative religion upon the 1893 Parliament came from individuals who were outside the educational establishment, especially Annie Besant from the theosophists[69] and Jenkin Lloyd Jones from the humanists.[70]

An intense interest in scientifically studying religion was indicated in the general assembly that convened during the morning of the parliament's fifth day, when the "Scientific Section" convened an opening session that gathered in a separate hall. Created to divert an overflowing crowd from the principal assemblies, this previously unplanned section provided a specific forum where papers reflecting a more scientific and less popular character were presented. Although most "major papers" presented during the parliament's proceedings were read by Protestant Christians who discussed Christian concerns, nearly every paper given in the "Scientific Section" that was not expressly methodological

or comparative engaged ancient, tribal, or non-Western, non-Christian subjects.[71] However this section was mis-named. Although the papers presented corresponded with the general connotations emanating from "the scientific study of religion," these presentations featured a Shaker representing Shakerism, Hindus discussing Hinduism, and a Japanese Buddhist explaining Japanese Buddhism.

Several weeks preceeding the 1893 Parliament, Merwin-Marie Snell, who chaired the scientific section, described the historic happening as "an exhibit of religions." Snell maintained that the participating religions were preoccupied with disseminating their particular propaganda. However he contended convincingly that, rather than decreasing or diminishing the scientific values inherent within the proceedings, the 1893 Parliament presented an important opportunity for conducting research in religion. Snell observed perceptively that the collection of materials is the most important part of any inductive science that that the scientific study examining religion would remain empty empiricism until every class of religious fact is recorded with absolute impartiality.[72] Snell encouraged scholars having a scientific interest in religion to attend the parliament and participate in interpersonal communication with adherents embracing the different world religions. In an address delivered during the 1893 Parliament, Snell described the gradual development of knowledge about the religious sentiment and discussed the pursuits conducted by several academic disciplines:

> But the science of religion may be extended to include the philosophy of religion in its application to the history of religions. As analytic and comparative processes enlarge and deepen, the history of religions transforms itself into a history of religion, and then into the philosophy of religions, which is a speculative science. The science of religion is compelled to assume among its materials nearly the whole content of the history of philosophy. Every religion implies a world-conception which becomes a philosophy as soon as clearly thought out. Every philosophy carries certain religious consequences. Religions are veiled philosophies.

> Only when wedded with the philosophy of religion does the importance of the science of religion become fully manifest. 73

Snell's most impressive and inspiring address was not an analysis probing methodological considerations, but a statement describing the future of religion. The speaker called religion as indestructable as force, the manifestation of the mightiest and most exalted of all forces, specifically human aspiration. "In the very structure of human organism," Snell said, "in the pulsations of every soul, in the interlacings of every fiber, are writ the great truths of the solidarity of life, the coordination of beings, the cooperation of wills."[74] Religion is a universal sentiment. Although religious forms differ in their intellectual, spiritual, moral, aesthetic, and practical manifestation, ultimately they exhibit the same principles, instincts, and aspirations. Snell contended that religion is true, thus immortal and universal. Recognizing universality, the speaker maintained that during a time when silks, porcelains, delicacies, and machinery are becoming the common properties of humanity, the intellectual and spiritual commodities will not remain inert:

> It appears then, that the religion of the future will have no fences; perhaps I had better say, it will have no blinds. It will be open on every side towards every vehicle of truth, every embodiment of beauty, every instrument of goodness, that is to say, toward all expressions of thought, all manifestation of feeling, all standards of conduct....The fundamental characteristic of the religios future will be a universal union in love. 75

Religion is eternal not simply in essence but in an infinitude of forms. Religion in the future will become sufficiently expansive to incorporate every form of doctrine, spirituality, morality, ritual, and organization; further religion will progress until every element reaches the highest development. Religion of the future will be universal by embodying all the thoughts, feelings, and emotions embraced by humanity; unite people of all lands into a single universal community; and establish upon the earth a heavenly order.

A decisive, consciencious attempt was extered by the trustees of the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions to accommodate appropriately university professors and independent scholars who participated in the 1993 Parliament. An invitation issued by the trustees requested a coordinator to create and conduct an international interdisciplinary academic conference called the Academy. "Calls" for papers and proposals were published in the journals and newsletters circulated by national professional associations, including the American Academy of Religion. Submissions of scholarly research was solicited through nationally circulated newspapers serving the academic community, such as the Chronicle of Higher Education. From the heavy response, sixty scholars were selected to occupy the twenty programs scheduled during a four-day period as a central component in the Parliament of the World's Religions. Among these academics were college and university professors from educational institutions scattered around the world and independent scholars unaffiliated with any professional academic community. Scholars were not confined to the Academy; some delivered presentations during other sessions, and others attended simply as participants without presenting papers. In compiling this compendium containing papers from the 1993 Parliament, the coordinator of the Academy has included papers presented during the international interdisciplinary academic conferemce and other programs that were included in the proceedings of the Parliament of the World's Religions. The scholarly dimensions inherent within the 1993 Parliament were evident. An immediate observation was that neither "intelligence" nor "scholarship" is alien from the religious community; indeed, both "rational inquiry" and "spiritual sensitivity" flourish in a creative tension that is essential for the further development of both. An appendix to this compendium makes available historically significant documents from these parliaments.

From the Academy emanate several enduring impressions. Unlike 1893, all religions of the world sent participants. The integrity and importance of each religious community and tradition were respected without adherents attempting to translate different religions to the categories contained in their own faith. Countless participants concluded that other religions teach important lessons, enrich the lives of the adherents, and assist in solving perplexing social problems. Numerous believers concluded that no inconsistency should develop inevitably between religious sentiments felt by the human heart and the intellectual construction and communication of spiritual truth discovered by the free mind. Inquisitive intelligence simply refines an ancient wisdom discovered as a fundamental foundation within the world's great religions.

Intolerance among adherents is neither inevitable nor desirable, especially within a universal religious community where each expression of a great truth constitutes a segment within a gradually growing picture.

The dialogue and discussion that characterized the Academy suggested an emerging interdisciplinary scholarship that transcends traditional academic studies. Miller and Shatzer encouraged scholars to develop the intellectual foundations necessary for supporting what they describe as "world humanism."[76] Scholars should analyze the "religious synthesis" developing within "planetary culture" when Eastern spirituality and mysticism meets Western science and rationalism.[77] Meeting this awesone, adventurous intellectual and spiritual challenge requires that scholars develop innovative interdisciplinary methodologies that address the essential epistemological questions about the perception of "truth" and "reality."[78] Realizing that the contemporary interconnected and rapidly changing world requires an important attitude-change among individuals, Kim encouraged "intercultural personhood" that combines Eastern and Western traditions.[79] Scholars should consider how different cultures influence the communication

of religious "truth" or "reality." Are the teachings within the seemingly different expressions of world religion communicated through the same or similar process, and is there a spiritual dimension in religious experience that remains incommunicable? Does "religion" comprise a single universal sentiment of which manifestations and expressions such as Hinduism and Christianity are simply representative, or are there distinct differences separating Eastern spirituality from Western religion? Huxley's introduction to Prabhavanda and Isherwood's translation of the Hindu sacred scriptures Bhagavad-Gita enumerates four fundamental principles. These principles are that the phenomenal world is manifested of a Divine Ground of all that exists; that humans can realize this reality through direct intuition that is superior to discursive reasoning; that human nature contains a phenomenal ego and an eternal Self, and that the purpose of human existence is for persons to identify themselves with the spiritual Self and gain intuitive knowledge of the Divine Ground.[80] In The Perennial Philosophy, Huxley employed quotations from the sacred scriptures cherished by adherents embrasing different expressions of world religion; the principles presented by different faith-groups appear identical and indicate a single spiritual foundation undergirding world religion.[81]

Certainly the convergence of Eastern and Western religion constitutes an epoch-marking event. Although this confrontation should prompt thoughtful dialogue, Saliba criticizes Christian denominations for ignoring the "new" religious movements, admonishes evangelicals for their hostility, and encourages compassion.[82] Amirthan asserted that Christianity has never been prepared to encounter the challenges of religious pluralism;[83] and Coleman identified neo-Orientalism as the major new challenge facing Christianity.[84] Conflict resolution and cultural synthesis requires effective intercultural communication and interreligious discussion.

Information infused into Western culture from Eastern sources prompts increasing insights through interdisciplinary analysis. Capra explored the parallels between modern physics and Eastern mysticism as approaches for apprehending reality;[85] this author argued that environmental, economic, and political problems stem from a "crisis of perception" arising from applying obsolete Cartesian concepts.[86] Mishlove maintained that psychic experiences, occult and mystical phenomena, and astral projection can be explained using new theories in physics.[87] In a fascinating juxtaposition of concepts garnered from mystics, physicists, and mediums, LaShane presented a unified field theory of the paranormal and advanced a theory for psychic healing.[88] Several writers indicate that this influx of information promotes integrating Western psychologies with Eastern religion;and other authors attest that the confluence of Eastern and Western ideas evokes a greater understanding about human health, the spiritual dimension of well-being, and self-restorative processes through nutrition and meditation.[89] Studying these techniques extends human knowledge about the human potential and the nature of reality by suggesting that rolfing, biofeedback, and gestalt encounters are more than simplistic therapies.[90]

Studying the new religions assists persons in comprehending contemporary cultural conditions and in predicting the possibilities for future religious developments.[91] Eister explained that "cults" appear as indicators of cultural crises such as the breakdown of traditional religion, disruptions of the standards of excellence, and loss of sources of meaning.[92] Pondering the possibility that the social structures casually determine religious beliefs, Westley predicted that complex societies will experience more highly differentiated religious forms.[93] And Wilson observed that the proliferation of new religious movements differs

from the growth of earlier movements in former generations because the speed of information transmission among contemporary cultures is extremely rapid and the possibilities for syncretism are greater.[94] Hence proliferating religious movements indicate a serious social collapse or cultural dislocation that has strong implications concerning the future prospects. Through rhetorical synthesis and dialectical enjoinment, through intercultural communication within which progressive perspectives develop, the new religions might evoke a syncretic religion or a discovery of a fundamental foundation within the varied expressions and manifestations of world religion. While Fox contends convincingly that denying mysticism represents a persistent intolerable scandal,[95] Smith compared and contrasted "the modern mind" and the "post-modern mind" predicting the prospects for progression beyond the modern Western mind-set.[96] Fox envisioned an emerging joyous, sensuous, eqalitarian, and ecological mysticism that is faithful to biblical imperatives and injunctions. Drawing creatively upon the Gaia hypothesis that describes the earth as a living organism, contemporary right brain/left brain research, and Jungian psychodynamics, Fox predicted a "paradigm shift" that will precipitate a global renaissance in human sexuality, intergenerational communication, alternative lifestyles, and religious worship and ecumenism.

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